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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safety Threats Especially in Gas and Propane Ovens of Seasonal Homes
**Pinellas County Health Department Warns of Dangers from
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning from Gas Appliances**

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), carbon-monoxide (CO) poisoning claims almost 500 lives in the U.S. each year. Thousands more become ill and require medical treatment. Some suffer lasting harm, including brain damage.

The risk of carbon monoxide poisoning increases when gas or propane fueled appliances, particularly stoves, are not inspected once a year by a licensed appliance technician using proper equipment. This maintenance is particularly important when seasonal residents open their homes after a period of not being used. Not having this maintenance done may result in appliances not operating properly, which can create dangerous levels of carbon monoxide in the home.

"If we get a call from a resident complaining of headaches or dizziness, we ask if gas appliances are present in or around the home," said Stan Stoudenmire, an environmental specialist with the Pinellas County Health Department. "If we go out to do an indoor air quality assessment, we sometimes find carbon monoxide at high levels if gas appliances are present. Recently, we found a gas oven that was only used intermittently. This caused incomplete combustion that produced carbon monoxide in the home."

Invisible, odorless and tasteless, carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas produced by burning fuels such as natural gas, kerosene, charcoal and wood. Inside and around a home, CO can come from gas-fueled water heaters, gas clothes dryers, gas ranges, portable generators, gas or charcoal grills or fireplaces. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include fatigue, chest pain, impaired vision and coordination, headaches, dizziness, confusion or nausea.

The Pinellas County Health Department urges *all* residents, especially seasonal residents, to have their fuel-burning appliances checked by a licensed appliance technician, using proper equipment, once a year. Additionally, it's important to have a carbon monoxide detector with battery backup if you have any of these appliances. The health department conducts indoor air quality assessments for a small fee.

By properly caring for your appliances, you help ensure their safe and effective operation and – most important – a safe home. For more information about indoor air quality testing, call the Pinellas County Health Department's Environmental Health Department at (727) 507-4336.

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